

1 MICHAEL N. FEUER, City Attorney, SBN 111529
 2 ARTURO MARTINEZ,
 3 Deputy Chief, Safe Neighborhoods & Gang Division, SBN 180355
 4 JONATHAN CRISTALL,
 5 Supervising Assistant City Attorney, SBN 191935
 6 LIORA FORMAN-ECHOLS,
 7 Assistant Superv. Deputy City Attorney, SBN 184135
 8 MARIA AGUILLON, Deputy City Attorney, SBN 199851
 9 200 N. Main Street, Suite 966, Los Angeles, California 90012
 10 Telephone: 213.978.4090 / Fax: 213.978.4670
 11 E-Mail: Maria.Aguillon@lacity.org

12 Attorneys for Plaintiff

NO FEE – GOV'T CODE § 6103

13 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

14 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CENTRAL DISTRICT

15 THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA,

Case No.:

16 Plaintiff,

**COMPLAINT FOR ABATEMENT AND
INJUNCTION**

17 vs.

[Health and Safety Code section 11570,
et seq.]

18 JULIA MAE WRIGHT (also known as JULIA M.
 19 WRIGHT and JULIA M. WILLIAMS), as an
 20 individual; LAMONT DERELLE WRIGHT (also
 21 known as LAMONT D. WRIGHT), as an individual;
 22 CHRISTINA JEANE TANNER (also known as
 23 CHRISTINA JEANE TANNER), as an individual;
 24 and DOES 1 through 25, inclusive,

(Unlimited Action)

25 Defendants.

26 PLAINTIFF, THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, alleges as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

27 1. This action ("Action") is brought and prosecuted by Plaintiff, the People of the
 28 State of California ("People"), for the purpose of abating an ongoing narcotics nuisance
 which exists at a single family residence located at 1907 South Ridgeley Drive, Los
 Angeles, California 90016 (the "Property") in the Mid-City area of Los Angeles. The Action

1 is brought pursuant to the Narcotics Abatement Law, California Health and Safety Code
2 section 11570, *et seq.* ("NAL"). The Property is approximately 219 feet from the New Los
3 Angeles Charter (Middle) School.

4 2. Plaintiff is filing this lawsuit in an effort to address unlawful narcotics activity
5 occurring at and directly-related to the Property since at least 2011. Defendant JULIA MAE
6 WRIGHT (also known as JULIA M. WRIGHT and JULIA M. WILLIAMS) ("Defendant J.
7 WRIGHT"), age 68, owns the Property and has owned it for over 26 years, since 1993.
8 Defendant LAMONT DERELLE WRIGHT (also known as LAMONT D. WRIGHT)
9 ("Defendant L. WRIGHT"), a 48-year-old male, is a Property resident and Defendant J.
10 WRIGHT's son. Defendant CHRISTINA JEANE TANNER (also known as CHRISTINA
11 JEANNE TANNER) ("Defendant TANNER"), a 29-year old female, is a Property resident
12 and Defendant L. WRIGHT's girlfriend.

13 3. Defendant L. WRIGHT has an extensive criminal background, with 16
14 convictions for narcotic sales crimes going back to 2002. Since at least October 6, 2011,
15 Defendant L. WRIGHT, on an ongoing basis, sells and stores cocaine at the Property, and
16 also allows others to remain on the Property to consume cocaine there. Defendant
17 TANNER also sells narcotics at the Property.

18 4. Defendants L. WRIGHT and TANNER reside at the Property with Defendant
19 L. WRIGHT's mother who appears to be physically infirm and has been observed
20 bedridden at the Property by Los Angeles Police Department ("LAPD") officers.
21 Defendants L. WRIGHT and TANNER assert that they are caretakers to Defendant J.
22 WRIGHT. Defendant J. WRIGHT has been present during the execution of four search
23 warrants and six arrests at the Property. When LAPD officers have told Defendant J.
24 WRIGHT that her son, Defendant L. WRIGHT, is selling narcotics, she simply replies that
25 she does not know what her son, Defendant L. WRIGHT, is doing. Defendant J. WRIGHT
26 is either unable or unwilling to abate the nuisance activity at the Property. Plaintiff
27 reluctantly names her as an indispensable party, without whom Plaintiff would be unable to
28 obtain adequate relief in this case.

1 5. The following is a brief summary of the narcotics activity at the Property:

2 • On October 6, 2011, LAPD officers arrested Defendant L. WRIGHT for
3 possession of narcotics for sales after executing a search warrant at the Property wherein
4 they recovered 1.11 gross grams of cocaine base, 380.87 gross grams of marijuana, two
5 digital scales and \$1610 in cash.

6 • On March 16, 2012, LAPD officers arrested Defendant L. WRIGHT for
7 possession of narcotics for sales after executing a search warrant at the Property, during
8 which they recovered 137.52 gross grams of cocaine base, 1.37 gross grams of cocaine
9 power, a digital scale and \$6155 in cash.

10 • In October 2015, after receiving community complaints, LAPD officers
11 investigated and observed narcotics sales activity at the Property. Then, on October 5,
12 2015, LAPD officers conducted a parole check on Defendant L. WRIGHT at the Property
13 and recovered 140.02 gross grams of cocaine base, two digital scales, \$3171 in cash and a
14 loaded shotgun. Officers arrested Defendant L. WRIGHT for possession of narcotics with a
15 firearm.

16 • In March 2017, Defendant L. WRIGHT sold cocaine base at the Property to
17 an LAPD informant. The informant knocked on the Property's door and was greeted by a
18 male, James Boykin. Inside, Defendant L. WRIGHT was lying on a couch. The informant
19 asked for cocaine base and gave Boykin \$60. Boykin then handed the cash to Defendant
20 L. WRIGHT and he (Defendant L. WRIGHT) reached inside a bag, pulled out cocaine base,
21 and gave it to Boykin, who then handed it to the informant. The informant then left the
22 Property.

23 • Within just the last year, LAPD informant(s) have obtained cocaine base from
24 the Property on three occasions.

25 • In September 2018, a confidential informant called Defendant L. WRIGHT
26 and asked to purchase \$20 of cocaine base. Defendant L. WRIGHT told the informant that
27 he would meet him/her around the corner at Burnside Avenue and Washington Boulevard,
28 which is across the street from the New Los Angeles Charter (Middle) School. Shortly

1 thereafter, officers saw Defendant L. WRIGHT exit the Property and drive to Burnside and
2 Washington where he drove up to the informant's vehicle. The informant gave Defendant
3 L. WRIGHT \$20 and in exchange Defendant L. WRIGHT handed the informant cocaine
4 base.

5 • In November 2018, a confidential informant called Defendant L. WRIGHT and
6 asked to purchase \$20 of cocaine base. Defendant L. WRIGHT told the informant that he
7 would meet him/her on Burnside Avenue between Washington Boulevard and Venice
8 Boulevard. Shortly thereafter, officers saw James Boykin exit the Property, leave on a
9 motorized scooter, and approach the informant on Burnside Avenue. Then, the informant
10 gave Boykin cash and in exchange Boykin handed the informant cocaine base.

11 • In May 2019, a confidential informant called Defendant L. WRIGHT and told
12 him that he/she would be stopping by the Property to purchase cocaine base. The
13 informant went to the Property where he/she was greeted by Defendant TANNER who told
14 the informant that Defendant L. WRIGHT was in the shower and she then sold cocaine
15 base to the informant for \$40.

16 • On June 9, 2019, LAPD officers executed a search warrant at the Property.
17 Upon entering the Property, LAPD officers heard Defendant J. WRIGHT scream and saw
18 Defendant L. WRIGHT grab an item and run into his bedridden mother's (Defendant J.
19 WRIGHT's) room. Defendant J. WRIGHT continued to scream from her bed as Defendant
20 L. WRIGHT placed the item underneath his mother's pillow. LAPD officers conducted a
21 systematic search of the Property; from underneath Defendant J. WRIGHT's pillow, the
22 officers recovered over three ounces of cocaine base, with a street value of over \$1500
23 dollars. Additionally, the officers also recovered a digital scale containing residue
24 resembling cocaine base and \$1865 in cash. Defendant L. WRIGHT and Defendant
25 TANNER were arrested for possession of narcotics for sales and narcotics sales,
26 respectively. After her arrest, Defendant TANNER admitted to LAPD officers that she
27 helped Defendant L. WRIGHT sell narcotics at the Property.

28 6. The Property is dilapidated and unkempt. During the execution of search

1 warrants at the Property, LAPD officers have observed the residence littered with trash and
2 smelling of urine. Officers have also observed loose flooring, collapsing cabinetry, a filthy
3 kitchen with a cockroach infestation and rat droppings, and a bedroom filled with refuse.
4 Numerous reports of elder abuse have been made in the last couple of years.

5 7. The narcotics and nuisance activity at the Property has not only significantly
6 affected the quality of life and the quiet enjoyment of property, but it has also taxed scarce
7 police resources by necessitating a disproportionate amount of LAPD attention. The
8 People bring this Action to obtain an injunction and other relief that will prevent the
9 narcotics nuisance and bring the unacceptable state of affairs at the Property to a halt.

10 II. THE PARTIES AND THE PROPERTY

11 A. Plaintiff

12 8. Plaintiff, the People, is the sovereign power of the State of California
13 designated in Health and Safety Code section 11571 to be the complaining party in law
14 enforcement actions brought to abate, enjoin and penalize narcotics nuisances.

15 B. Defendants

16 9. Defendant J. WRIGHT is the 68-year old owner of the Property. From March
17 31, 1993 until February 24, 2005, title to the Property was held by Defendant J. WRIGHT
18 under the name Julia Williams. From February 25, 2005 until March 22, 2017, title to the
19 Property was held by Defendant J. WRIGHT and her son Defendant L. WRIGHT, as joint
20 tenants. On or about March 23, 2017, title to the Property was transferred to Defendant J.
21 WRIGHT.

22 10. Defendant L. WRIGHT resides at the Property and it is his residency there
23 that attracts the drug activity that has come to characterize the Property.

24 11. Defendant TANNER resides at, and otherwise frequents, the Property and
25 sells narcotics there.

26 12. The true names and capacities of Defendants sued herein as DOES 1
27 through 25, inclusive, are unknown to Plaintiff, who therefore sues said Defendants by such
28 fictitious names. When the true names and capacities of said Defendants have been

1 ascertained, Plaintiff will ask leave of the Court to amend this Complaint and to insert in lieu
2 of such fictitious names the true names and capacities of said fictitiously named
3 Defendants.

4 **C. The Property**

5 13. The Property, which is situated in a residential neighborhood, consists of a
6 single family home situated on the west side of Ridgeley Drive, north of Washington
7 Boulevard. The Property is located at the commonly-known address of 1907 South
8 Ridgeley Drive, Los Angeles, California 90016. The Property's legal description is, "Lot 9,
9 Block 5 Of Tract No, 5469, In The County Of Los Angeles, State Of California, As Per Map
10 Recorded In Book 58, Page(s) 58 To 93 Of Maps, In The Office Of The County Recorder of
11 Los Angeles County. [¶] Parcel ID: 5064-007-007." Assessor's Parcel Number: 5064-007-
12 007.

13 **III. NARCOTICS ABATEMENT LAW**

14 14. The abatement of a nuisance is a long established and well-recognized
15 exercise of the state's police power. (*People v. Barbieri* (1917) 33 Cal.App. 770, 775;
16 *People ex rel. Hicks v. Sarong Gals* (1974) 42 Cal.App.3d 556, 563.) Since its enactment
17 in 1972, the principal purpose of the NAL (Health & Saf. Code, § 11570, et seq.) is the
18 abatement of buildings and places "used for the purpose of unlawfully selling, serving,
19 storing, keeping, manufacturing, or giving away any controlled substance, precursor, or
20 analog specified in this division" (Health & Saf. Code, § 11570).

21 15. The NAL provides that every building or place used for the purpose of
22 unlawfully selling, serving, storing, keeping, manufacturing, or giving away any controlled
23 substance, precursor, or analog *inter alia*, "is a nuisance which **shall** be enjoined, abated,
24 and prevented . . . whether it is a public or private nuisance." (Health & Saf. Code, § 11570
25 [emphasis added]; *People ex rel Lungren v. Peron* (1997) 59 Cal.App.4th 1383, 1389; *Lew*
26 *v. Superior Court* (1993) 20 Cal.App.4th 866, 870-871.)

27 16. Health and Safety Code section 11571 authorizes a city attorney to bring an
28 action to abate, prevent and perpetually enjoin such nuisances. It provides in relevant part:

1 "Whenever there is reason to believe that a nuisance as described in Section 11570 is
2 kept, maintained, or exists in any county, the district attorney of the county, or the city
3 attorney of any incorporated city or of any city and county, in the name of the people,
4 may . . . maintain an action to abate and prevent the nuisance and perpetually to enjoin the
5 person conducting or maintaining it, and the owner, lessee, or agent of the building or place
6 in or upon which the nuisance exists from directly or indirectly maintaining or permitting the
7 nuisance."

8 17. Health and Safety Code section 11573(a) provides that: "If the existence of
9 the nuisance is shown in the action to the satisfaction of the court or judge, either by
10 verified complaint or affidavit, the court or judge **shall** allow a temporary restraining order or
11 injunction to abate and prevent the continuance or recurrence of the nuisance." (Emphasis
12 added.) In addition, Health and Safety Code section 11581 provides, as an additional
13 remedy, for the removal and sale of all fixtures and movable property on the premises used
14 in aiding or abetting the nuisance and for the closure of the building for up to one year.

15 **IV. FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION FOR NARCOTICS ABATEMENT**

16 **[Health and Safety Code Section 11570, *et seq.* --**

17 **Against All Defendants and DOES 1 through 25]**

18 18. Plaintiff incorporates paragraphs 1 through 17 above as if fully alleged herein.

19 19. Since at least 2011, the Property has been, and is *currently* being used for
20 the purposes of unlawfully selling, serving, storing, keeping, manufacturing or giving away
21 controlled substances in violation of Health and Safety Code section 11570, *et seq.*

22 20. The general reputation of the Property in the community and amongst law
23 enforcement is that it is a location where the sale of cocaine takes place on a regular basis
24 by Defendants L. WRIGHT, TANNER and others.

25 21. Defendants, and DOES 1 through 25, are responsible for conducting,
26 maintaining, and/or directly or indirectly permitting the nuisance as alleged herein. Plaintiff
27 has no plain, speedy and adequate remedy at law, and unless Defendants, and DOES 1
28 through 25, are restrained and enjoined by order of this Court, they will continue to use,

1 occupy and maintain, and/or to aid, abet or permit, directly or indirectly, the use, occupation
2 and maintenance of the Property, together with the fixtures and appurtenances located
3 therein, for the nuisance complained of herein, to the great and irreparable damage of the
4 public and in violation of California law.

5 **V. PRAYER**

6 **WHEREFORE, PLAINTIFF PRAYS THAT THIS COURT ORDER, ADJUDGE AND**
7 **DECREE AS FOLLOWS:**

8 **AS TO THE FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

9 1. That Defendants, and DOES 1 through 25, and the Property, be declared in
10 violation of Health and Safety Code section 11570, *et seq.*

11 2. That the Property, together with the fixtures and moveable property therein
12 and thereon, be found to constitute a public nuisance and be permanently abated as such
13 in accordance with Section 11581 of the California Health and Safety Code.

14 3. That the Court grant a preliminary injunction, permanent injunction and order
15 of abatement in accordance with Section 11570, *et. seq.*, of the California Health and
16 Safety Code, enjoining and restraining each Defendant and their agents, officers,
17 employees, heirs and anyone acting on their behalf, from unlawfully selling, serving,
18 storing, keeping, manufacturing, or giving away controlled substances on the Property,
19 and/or directly or indirectly maintaining or permitting such nuisance activity.

20 4. That the Court order physical and managerial improvements to the Property in
21 accordance with California Health and Safety Code section 11573.5, and such orders as
22 are otherwise appropriate, to remedy the nuisance on the Property and enhance the
23 abatement process, including but not limited to, a prohibition on Defendants L. WRIGHT's
24 and TANNER's presence at or within 1000 feet of the Property at any time, for any reason;
25 evicting any residents involved in narcotics activity or violent crime; prohibiting known
26 narcotics users and dealers from accessing the Property; and strict limitations on who else
27 may be present on the Property at all times.

28 5. That as part of the Judgment, an Order of Abatement be issued, and that the

1 Property be closed for a period of one year, not to be used for any purpose, and be under
2 the control and custody of this Court for said period of time; or, in the alternative, if the
3 Court deems such closure to be unduly harmful to the community, that Defendants, and
4 DOES 1 through 25, pay an amount of damages equal to the fair market rental value of the
5 Property for one year to the City or County in whose jurisdiction the nuisance is located in
6 accordance with Health and Safety Code section 11581 subdivision (c)(1).

7 6. That Defendants, and DOES 1 through 25, each be assessed a civil penalty in
8 an amount not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00).

9 7. That all fixtures and moveable property used in conducting, maintaining, aiding
10 or abetting the nuisance at the Property be removed by the LAPD and sold in the manner
11 provided for the sale of chattels under execution. Said fixtures and property shall be
12 inventoried and a list prepared and filed with this Court.

13 8. That there shall be excepted from said sale, such property to which title is
14 established in some third party not a defendant, nor agent, officer, employee or servant of
15 any defendant in this proceeding.

16 9. That the proceeds from said sale be deposited with this Court for payment of
17 the fees and costs of sale. Such costs may occur in closing said property and keeping it
18 closed, removal of said property, and Plaintiff's costs in the Action, including attorneys'
19 fees, and such other costs as the Court shall deem proper.

20 10. That if the proceeds of the sale do not fully discharge all such costs, fees and
21 allowances, the Property shall also be sold under execution issued upon the order of the
22 Court or judge and the proceeds of such sale shall be applied in a like manner. That any
23 excess monies remaining after payment of approved costs shall be delivered to the owner
24 of said property. Ownership shall be established to the satisfaction of this Court.

25 11. That Defendants, and DOES 1 through 25, and any agents, trustees, officers,
26 employees and anyone acting on their behalf, and their heirs and assignees, be perpetually
27 enjoined from transferring, conveying, or encumbering any portion of the Property, for
28 consideration or otherwise, without first obtaining the Court's prior approval.

1 12. That Defendants, and DOES 1 through 25, and any agents, trustees, officers,
2 employees and anyone acting on their behalf, and their heirs and assignees, be ordered to
3 immediately notify any transferees, purchasers, commercial lessees, or other successors in
4 interest to the subject Property of the existence and application of any temporary
5 restraining order, preliminary injunction, or permanent injunction to all prospective
6 transferees, purchasers, commercial lessees, or other successors in interest, *before*
7 entering into any agreement to sell, lease or transfer the Property, for consideration or
8 otherwise.

9 13. That Defendants, and DOES 1 through 25, and any agents, trustees, officers,
10 employees and anyone acting on their behalf, and their heirs and assignees, be ordered to
11 immediately give a complete, legible copy of any temporary restraining order and
12 preliminary and permanent injunctions to all prospective transferees, purchasers, lessees,
13 or other successors in interest to the Property.

14 14. That Defendants, and DOES 1 through 25, and any agents, trustees, officers,
15 employees and anyone acting on their behalf, and their heirs and assignees, be ordered to
16 immediately request and procure signatures from all prospective transferees, purchasers,
17 lessees, or other successors in interest to the subject Property, which acknowledges
18 his/her respective receipt of a complete, legible copy of any temporary restraining order,
19 preliminary and permanent injunction, at least 30 days prior to the close of escrow, and
20 deliver a copy of such acknowledgment to the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, c/o
21 Deputy City Attorney Maria Aguillon or her designee.

22 15. That if the Office of the Public Guardian determines that a public guardian
23 should be appointed and/or a conservatorship should be established for Defendant J.
24 WRIGHT, the Court stay any power of attorney appointing Defendants LAMONT DERELLE
25 WRIGHT's and/or CHRISTINA JEANE TANNER's as agent(s) for Defendant J. WRIGHT.


26 16. That Plaintiff recover the costs of this Action, including law enforcement
27 investigative costs and any fees, including attorneys' fees, authorized by law, not to exceed
28 \$1,000,000.00, from Defendants, and DOES 1 through 25.

1 17. That Plaintiff recover the amount of the filing fees and the amount of the fee for
2 the service of process or notices which would have been paid but for Government Code
3 section 6103.5, designating it as such. The fees may, at the Court's discretion, include the
4 amount of the fees for certifying and preparing transcripts.

5 18. That Plaintiff be granted such other and further relief as the Court deems just
6 and proper.

7
8 DATED: July 10, 2019

Respectfully submitted,
MICHAEL N. FEUER, City Attorney
JONATHAN CRISTALL, Assistant City Attorney
LORA FORMAN-ECHOLS, Asst. Superv. Deputy
City Attorney

11
12 By: 
13 MARIA AGUILLON
14 Deputy City Attorney
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16 STATE OF CALIFORNIA
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